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ACTIVITY PATTERNS OF PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY OR WHO ARE PRINCIPAL CARERS

The time spent on different activities by people in the community depends on many factors, including their family and other responsibilities and their participation in education and the labour force. People with a disability, or those looking after someone with a disability, spend their time in different ways when compared to the general population.

7.14 AVERAGE TIME SPENT BY ALL PERSONS PER WEEK, Age by Disability Status and Carer Status

	Sleeping hours	Other personal care hours	Employment and education hours	Household work hours	Social and leisure hours	Sometimes to always feels rushed %
15-64 YEARS						
Disability						
Moderate to profound restriction	60.6	20.1	15.4	30.1	41.3	66.8
Other	60.1	17.5	23.8	27.7	38.1	70.2
Total	60.2	18.1	21.9	28.2	38.8	69.5
No disability	60.2	16.0	31.9	25.3	34.1	78.4
Principal carer	58.1	17.5	14.1	44.1	33.7	82.3
Not principal carer	60.2	16.5	30.0	25.4	35.3	76.1
Total	60.2	16.5	29.5	26.0	35.2	76.2

65 YEARS AND OVER

Disability

Moderate to profound restriction	61.7	25.9	**0.1	24.1	55.4	25.6
Other	59.9	22.8	1.4	31.7	51.0	32.1
Total	60.4	23.6	1.1	29.8	52.1	30.5
No disability	60.4	21.5	2.9	33.7	48.9	38.4
Principal carer	59.2	18.7	**4.1	39.1	44.6	56.2
Not principal carer	60.4	22.9	1.7	31.0	51.1	32.7
Total	60.4	22.8	1.8	31.3	50.9	33.5

Source: Unpublished data, Time Use Survey, 1997.

People with a disability

People in the 15-64 years age group with a disability spent over 30% less time on education and employment activities than people without a disability. Those who have a moderate to profound restriction (having difficulty or needing help with self-care, mobility or communication) spent considerably less time than others in this age group. They spent an amount of time sleeping which was similar to that spent by people with lesser or no disability.

People with a disability used more time for personal care activities, such as bathing, dressing, eating and getting ready to go out. The average time spent on personal care for persons with a moderate to profound restriction was 20 hours per week, compared with 18 hours for those with a lesser disability and 16 hours per week for persons without a disability. Household work also took up more of their day. This could be because their restriction makes it more difficult for them to do tasks or simply because they have more time available. Social and leisure activities such as reading, relaxing and watching television, occupied more time for people with a disability. Even though a high proportion of the population aged 15-64 years sometimes or always felt rushed, people with a disability were less likely to feel this pressure.

As most of the people in the 65 years and over age group were retired, time spent on employment and education was quite small, while time devoted to personal care was higher. This group put more hours into housework than younger people, and time spent on personal care and on leisure activities was also greater. People with disabilities spent more time on personal care and leisure activities than others in the age group and spent less time on household work. For people aged 65 and over, a smaller proportion of all groups felt rushed, and again the proportion was lower for people with disabilities.

Principal carers

People with disabilities often need help and support to undertake the tasks associated with daily living. Family members were the main providers of help or informal care needed by people with moderate to profound restriction living in households. The person providing most of the informal care, the principal carer, lives in the same household in the majority (72%) of cases. The extra care the principal carer provides is reflected in more household work and less sleep. Carers aged 60 and over spend 26% more time, and younger carers 74% more time, on household work than

non-carers.

Principal carers aged 15-64 years spent on average less than half the time on employment and education activities than others in that age group. Having responsibility for the care of children or adults who need assistance or supervision, limits involvement in paid work. In this they were similar to mothers of young children (aged under 15). Some carers undertake both roles. For example, 39% of principal carers under 65 are mothers of young children and 29% are caring for young children with a disability. Principal carers are more likely to feel rushed than those who are not principal carers, but not as much as mothers of young children.

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